

**Foreign equity in plantation sector**

3. SHRI GAYA SINGH:

SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Labour Ministry has opposed Government's proposal to allow upto 74 per cent foreign equity in the plantation sector; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) No formal reference has been received from Labour Ministry in this regard.

(b) Does not arise.

**Crisis in tea industry**

4. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:

SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the Crisis in Tea Industry due to the continued decline in tea prices and non-payment of wages to the plantation workers resulting in starvation deaths, particularly in South Indian Tea Gardens;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps are being taken to solve the problem?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Government is aware of the crisis faced by tea industry in South India due to declining prices. However, no reports about non-payment of wages to the plantation workers resulting in starvation deaths have been received by the Government/Tea Board.

(c) In order to resolve the problem of low prices at the auction in South India, Government has taken various measures which include implementation of a Price Subsidy Scheme through Tea Board for the small growers of tea (holding tea gardens upto 10.12 ha.) under which a maximum subsidy of



Rs.5/- per kg. of tea is being provided; launching of a quality upgradation Programme by the Tea Board in the Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu for improving quality of tea manufactured by small growers to help better price realisation and increasing basic custom duty on import of tea from 15% to 35% etc.

**Benefit of new export policy to onion producing farmers**

†5. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK:  
PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether onion producing farmers and businessmen have been benefited by new export policy of Government and whether onion producing farmers are going to be benefited till the implementation of Government's decision regarding the export;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether onion producing farmers are likely to face crisis in the next crop as a result of the export policy; and

(d) if so, who is responsible for it and what immediate steps have been taken by Government to solve this problem?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Under the present export policy for onion, Government has been releasing quota for export of onion through designated canalising agencies from time to time, keeping domestic requirement in focus. On 26.4.2000, Government permitted export of 50,000 MTs of all varieties of onions during the period 26.4.2000 till 31.5.2000 through the designated canalising agencies. On 17.5.2000, Government permitted additional export of 50,000 MTs of all varieties of onions, other than Bangalore Rose and Krishnapuram onions, during May, June and July, 2000. Restrictions on export of Bangalore Rose and Krishnapuram onions have been removed with effect from 26.4.2000 and the same are now being exported freely through Karnataka State Agricultural Produce Processing & Export Corporation Ltd.(KAPPEC), Bangalore and AP MARKFED, Hyderabad respectively. The Government has also evolved a long-term export policy for onion. Under this long-term policy,

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.